

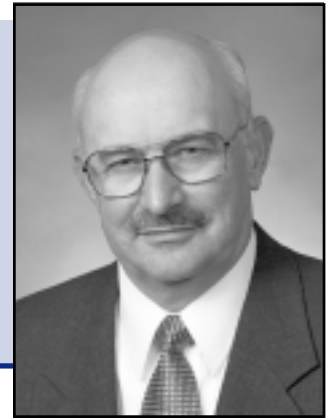


REPRESENTATIVE
MARY
SKINNER

2003

14TH DISTRICT REPORT

Session-End Report



REPRESENTATIVE
JIM
CLEMENTS

YOUR 14TH DISTRICT TEAM

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Dear Neighbors,

The Legislature adjourned June 11, after 105 days in the regular session and two subsequent special sessions.

Although our greatest challenge was closing a state operating budget deficit of more than \$2.7 billion, our greatest opportunity was to work for a stronger economy that will preserve existing jobs and bring new businesses and jobs to Washington.

We approved a no-new-taxes budget that preserves vital services and protects those most in need. We addressed reforms in unemployment insurance, provided for smaller class sizes and salary increases for beginning teachers, and adopted tax relief that will grow our economy and jobs. This newsletter provides a brief review of major legislation in the 2003 session.

Again, thank you for your phone calls, letters, cards, e-mail, and support. Your input is valuable to us and has helped us to make progress on issues important to families throughout the 14th District.

Please feel free to contact us any time you have questions or comments.

Sincerely

Rep. Mary Skinner
State Representative

Rep. Jim Clements
State Representative

PUTTING PUBLIC SAFETY FIRST

The Legislature passed two bills responding to the state Supreme Court rulings. One outlaws filming up a woman's skirt without consent. The other allows prosecutors to file second-degree murder charges in assault cases that result in death.

We also wanted to adopt an anti-terrorism bill to give law enforcement officers new tools to protect citizens. However, House Democrat leaders almost did not allow a vote on the bill. Why? Because 15 Democrats wanted to turn it into a gun-control measure by adding firearms to the bill's definition of "weapons of mass destruction."

It's ridiculous to try to put hunting rifles in with chemical and biological agents. Fortunately, the amendment was dropped at the last minute. We successfully pressed for what turned out to be a 77-20 "yes" vote. The Senate passed an amended version of the anti-terrorism bill. However, the House and Senate didn't resolve their differences. We expect to revisit this issue again next session.

SUPPORT FOR 'KINSHIP' CAREGIVERS

This session brought an important step in our continuing effort to improve care for children – and the approach the state Department of Social and Health Services takes toward those who care for children.

We have long wanted to see more children placed into the homes of willing and able relatives, which would ease the load on the already overburdened foster parents in our state. One of the best bills to become law this year was House Bill 1233, known as the "kinship" bill. Now, in a situation when a child is removed from the home because the parents are unable to supply proper care, the kinship law will require DSHS to seek out other family members to provide that care. This can do much to ensure stability and continuity in the child's life.

We also supported House Bill 1563, focused on the well-being of children who are cut off from grandparents or other relatives and people with whom they have developed close relationships. HB 1563 would give non-parents a route for seeking court-ordered visitation. This bill would be particularly helpful to grandparents who have been denied visitation with their grandchildren. It received House approval but did not pass the Senate.

CAPITOL THEATRE GETS CAPITAL BUDGET MONEY

Mary successfully secured \$500,000 in the state's capital construction budget for renovation of the Capitol Theatre. The theatre, which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary, will begin the first phase of a multi-million dollar project to renovate the structure.



Rep. Clements with Katie and Mark Ensign of Selah, who took a week out of their ninth-grade year to serve as legislative pages during the 2003 session. For information on applying to be a page in 2004, please phone him or Rep. Skinner.

2003 SESSION REPORT

HOW WE'RE WORKING TO PRESERVE AND CREATE JOBS

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM

Washington has the third highest unemployment insurance cost in the nation. Many employers look at this cost when deciding whether to set up business in our state. Unemployment taxes cost Boeing \$772 per worker per year. Compare that to California which is \$394 less. We adopted legislation to reduce these costs and protect jobs in Washington.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION BOARD

Using interest generated from the state's Public Works Trust Fund, we passed legislation to provide an ongoing funding source for the state's Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB). This board takes proposals from communities that seek funding for infrastructure to support new businesses. It then decides the areas where this money can best be utilized for roads, bridges, water, sewer and storm infrastructure, fiber-optic cable, and other provisions that would attract businesses into our communities. More businesses mean more jobs.

MAKING THE WASHINGTON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION PERMANENT

Mary prime-sponsored legislation to make the Washington State Economic Development Commission a permanent entity. This commission was originally established last year by the governor to help guide Washington's economic development policy and provide continuity to the state's economic strategy. Mary's bill, approved by the Legislature and signed into law, establishes the commission in statute, ensuring it will remain in place to help our state's economic future.

TAX RELIEF FOR JOBS

We approved tax breaks for Boeing to be implemented only if Boeing decides to build the 7E7 "Dreamliner" jet in Washington. Although the 1,200 jobs created by the siting of this plant most likely will be on the west side of the mountains, the multiplying effect will create thousands of new jobs statewide – many even here in the Yakima area.

ALLOWING WINE TO BE SOLD AT FARMERS MARKETS

We adopted legislation that will allow Washington wineries to sell bottled wines at farmers markets. Wineries must first obtain an endorsement from the Liquor Control Board. The endorsement, which costs \$75 annually, would not allow wine tasting or on-premises consumption, but it would allow wine to be sold at qualifying farmers markets. This could potentially increase jobs in the



wine-growing regions of our state and attract more people to our Yakima Farmers Market.

CONSUL TRADE MISSION

We worked with Lt. Gov. Brad Owen and the Yakima Valley Visitors and Convention Bureau to bring consuls from nearly 40 nations on a tour of Central Washington. The recent two-day tour featured apples, hops, wine, agriculture, and other local industries. It's our hope that this trade mission will boost Yakima Valley's economy and provide more jobs by promoting tourism and business opportunities.

REP. MARY SKINNER • REP. JIM CLEMENTS

AGANDA FAMILY GETS SHORT REPRIEVE

During a good part of the summer we worked to prevent three members of a local family from being deported to the Philippines. Tomas and Judy Aganda and their four children entered the country on tourist visas in 1990, opened a dry cleaning store in Selah, then sought to stay. They have been a productive, law-abiding family in our community. When Tomas, Judy and their youngest daughter applied for an extension to stay in Selah, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals denied the request and said they must leave by late August.

In the Philippines, the family has no safe haven. The Agandas fear that if they are returned, they may be subject to extortion and physical persecution by a Communist organization that operates outside the control of the Philippine government. To complicate matters, Judy has brain cancer. It is doubtful she would be able to obtain medical treatment for her condition in the Philippines. Even if available, it would be prohibitively expensive, and the family has no medical insurance in the Philippines.

We have taken our fight as high as the White House. Fortunately, a 60-day delay was granted just a day before the Agandas were scheduled to leave. A federal judge will make a final decision regarding the Agandas on or after Oct. 17.

BILINGUAL FAMILY HEALTH HELPLINE AVAILABLE

Many of our local Hispanic families often don't know where to turn to get health information. Earlier this year, a national health helpline was created to help Hispanic families get basic health information to help them prevent and manage chronic conditions. The "Su Familia" helpline also provides referrals to local health providers and programs such as the State Children's Health Insurance Program. The toll-free number is: 866-783-2645 or 866-SU-FAMILIA. Information is available both in Spanish and English.

Printed on recycled paper

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REPRESENTATIVES
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2003 SESSION REPORT

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2003 SESSION REPORT

HELPING SENIORS AFFORD PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

We would have preferred a bill that would have given prescription drug benefits to our low-income seniors and disabled citizens. We eventually supported legislation that provides drug discounts.

The plan, which was approved by the Legislature, directs the state's Health Care Authority to negotiate price discounts for Washington residents 50 and older or disabled with income up to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level and lacking prescription drug coverage. Discounts may not be made at the expense of retail pharmacies.

It's our hope that until more comprehensive legislation can be approved to address the soaring costs of prescription drugs, this bill will help low-income citizens to get the medicines they need at prices they can afford.



During the legislative session, Rep. Mary Skinner proudly displayed the United States flag in the window of her office in support of American troops in Iraq.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE

Several drug companies have announced voluntary discount programs for Medicare-eligible patients with low to moderate incomes. Eligible subscribers to these programs can receive brand-name prescriptions at a 20 to 40 percent discount or with co-pays as low as \$12.

To see if you qualify, call the numbers below.

**GLAXOSMITHKLINE
ORANGE CARD
1 - 888 - ORANGE6**

**NOVARTIS CARE CARD
1 - 866 - 974 - CARE**

**PFIZER SHARE CARD
1 - 800 - 717 - 6005**

**LILLY ANSWERS CARD
1 - 877 - RX - LILLY**

**TOGETHER RX
1 - 800 - 865 - 7211**

OTHER HEALTH CARE NEWS...

Rising costs of health care continue to be of great concern. Part of those costs are driven by skyrocketing malpractice insurance premiums that doctors must pay to stay in business. We had hoped to adopt legislation that would have limited lawsuits and attorney contingency fees that have pushed up the costs of malpractice insurance premiums. Unfortunately, an agreement on this issue was not reached before the end of session. This issue will continue to be a priority when the Legislature gathers in January 2004.

Nursing homes found their own way out of their money problems – taxing themselves. The tax money will flow back to the nursing homes, and the federal Medicaid match will allow nursing homes to nearly double their money. This will help ensure that the doors will remain open at our local nursing homes.

2003 SESSION REPORT

NO-NEW-TAXES BUDGET PROVIDING FOR VITAL SERVICES WHILE MAKING GOVERNMENT LIVE WITHIN ITS MEANS

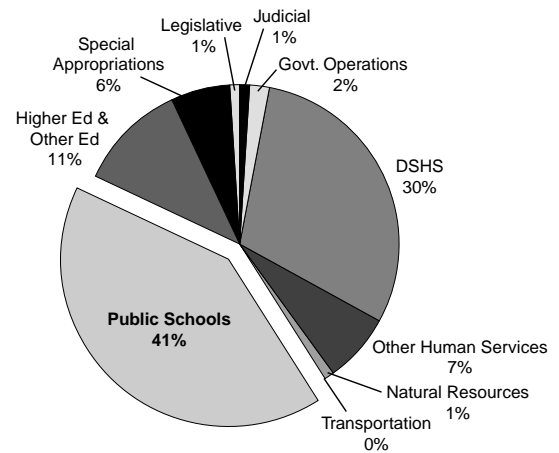
Facing a \$2.7 billion operating budget shortfall going into the 2003 session, many people were doubtful that such a large deficit could be addressed without raising taxes. However, with people losing their jobs, statewide unemployment rates hovering at 7.5 percent (9.2 percent in Yakima County), and an economy that is still very uncertain, now is not the time to be raising taxes.

Instead, we felt that it was our responsibility to develop a budget that makes government live within its means, without shifting the burden to families and businesses.

Jim serves on the House Appropriations Committee, which develops the state operating budget. He pushed for a budget that would focus our limited resources on the most pressing priorities – maintaining vital services, providing for our children's education, and protecting our state's most vulnerable residents.

We adopted a spending plan that maintains health coverage for low-income children and avoids deep reductions in services for the developmentally disabled and at-risk youth. The budget maintains

2003-05 OPERATING BUDGET GENERAL FUND – STATE & RELATED STATE ACCOUNTS



health care coverage for 100,000 low-income citizens on the Basic Health Plan. Home health care workers will receive a 75-cent-per-hour pay raise.

Teachers in their first seven years will receive a pay increase. Per student funding for class-size reduction was boosted to \$254, up from \$212.

We wanted to do more for teachers, health care workers and state employees. The reality is that the budget is a reflection of our tight economic times.

However, on the positive side, by balancing this budget without new taxes, we position Washington for a quicker economic recovery and job creation.

GETTING WASHINGTON WORKING AGAIN

We are concerned with the closing of businesses in downtown Yakima. Farmers continue to struggle to make a living for their families as low commodity prices persist. Statewide, more than 160,000 people have lost their jobs in the last three years. Many people here in Yakima County are out of work. Families continue to worry how they will survive in such a tough economy.

If we are to prevent future budget deficits, our first order of business must be getting our economy on the road to recovery. Our top priority

this session was to push for legislation that would provide for a strong economy in Washington and enable people to work again.

Just prior to the session, Mary was appointed as ranking member of the House Trade and Economic Development Committee. This committee's primary function is to expand markets and create jobs.

Together, we fought against tax increases that would further stifle Washington's economy. We worked to provide legislation that would attract more jobs to our state and to the Yakima area – and we held together for a budget that places the needs of people ahead of the wants of government.